

## Gates\_Elizabeth

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**From:** Handwerker\_Margaret on behalf of Borst\_Charlotte  
**Sent:** Tuesday, January 22, 2008 2:04 PM  
**To:** FACSTAFF; All\_Students  
**Subject:** This Week at Rhodes

•The Rhodes Board of Trustees met for its January meeting in New Orleans. The Board conducted its normal committee business, but perhaps more importantly, the meeting was set up to be a “retreat” where the Trustees, with the help of Rhodes faculty and administrators, could think about some positive directions for the college. Divided into three “work groups,” Board members considered “The Liberal Arts beyond the Gates,” “Alumni and Parent Connections,” and “Game-changing Partners.” Each group was charged with considering existing opportunities that might be expanded, determining other opportunities that could build on our strengths, and establishing specific steps in the coming years to leverage our strengths. It was a very successful meeting, and we all look forward to discussing these ideas with the college community.

•The death of Professor David Ramsey leaves a void in the Rhodes family that will be hard to fill. A graduate of the class of 1961, Mr. Ramsey came back to Rhodes in 1965 as a professor of music, retiring in 2006. Generations of Rhodes students recall his presence at the piano for our top-rated Rhodes choral groups. But Professor Ramsey, like many Rhodes faculty, also became an important member of the Memphis community. The organist for the Memphis “Redbirds,” Ramsey was admired by many baseball fans, but he also had a long-time affiliation with the semi-professional choral group who sang Handel’s Messiah every year at Calvary Episcopal Church. Professor Ramsey was also a choir director and organist at several Memphis churches in his lifetime, and he was widely respected in the church organist community in Memphis. On a personal note, I had the privilege last year of singing in the Rhodes Master Singers where Professor Ramsey was in his last year as the group’s accompanist—I came to understand and appreciate with Memphis and Rhodes his excellent musicianship and wonderful sense of humor. He will be greatly missed by all of us.

•I am happy to announce that the Mellon Foundation will provide more than \$500,000 over three years to strengthen our environmental studies initiatives and to fund three postdoctoral positions to help Rhodes expand its current Environmental Science Program. Environmental Studies postdocs will design and incorporate courses on environmental policy that also enhance their own teaching and research interests. In addition, they will be assigned faculty mentors to help them integrate the new courses into current department programs; collaborate on research plans; and assist in recruiting research students. The postdocs will bring a critical policy perspective to Rhodes’ Environmental Science Program that currently is heavy in the sciences (biology, ecology, chemistry, physics, earth sciences). The three-year grant period also will enable faculty to develop a plan and a framework for permanent expansion of the program including offering an environmental studies minor. Community partnerships will provide opportunities for Rhodes faculty and students to move beyond science and statistics and implement research and outreach projects in such areas as environmental law and activism. Rhodes plans to build upon existing partnerships with such organizations as the Memphis Zoo, the Wolf River Conservancy, the Memphis and Shelby County Health Department and Midtown North Neighborhood Association. The timing is ideal for Rhodes as we implement our new foundations curriculum and our scholarships to fellowships initiative. Dr. David Kessler will direct the program.

•Many of you submitted nominations of students to participate in a new student blogging initiative that will be launched on rhodes.edu this semester. The idea is for the student bloggers to bring to life through their writings and photographs the special nature of a Rhodes education—close relationships with faculty; stringent learning experiences both inside the classroom and elsewhere; myriad opportunities to do research, service, internships and study abroad; the multiple advantages of our Memphis location. In choosing the bloggers we sought diversity of all kinds—geographic, cultural, ethnic and gender. We wanted to showcase multiple activities and majors. And, of course, the students need to be good writers. Based on those criteria, our four bloggers will be Sarah Barowka, Jenny Gernon, Christina Lu and Tyler Turner. Thank you for your thoughtful nominations.

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